

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer,

Over the past several months there has been an increasing body of evidence indicating vitamin D deficiencies may be associated with increased COVID-19 complications, severity of symptoms, and mortality. Vitamin D has long been associated with a healthy immune system and adaptive immune response, particularly when combatting viral and respiratory infections. It is estimated that over 40 percent of American adults have inadequate levels of vitamin D, with those over the age of 65, the Hispanic community, and the African American community exhibiting the most severe deficiencies. As a result, several higher education institutions and medical research teams have examined the connection between vitamin D and COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic.

In April and May, Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and Northwestern University published preliminary studies showing a correlation between vitamin D deficiencies and increased likelihood of developing severe symptoms or dying from COVID-19. In September, University of Chicago Medicine completed a study indicating similar trends between vitamin D deficiencies and susceptibility to COVID-19 infection and complications. Professors at Harvard Medical School have also publicly commented on the strong correlation between vitamin D deficiencies and COVID-19 complications while highlighting vitamin D's overall benefits for respiratory health. Harvard University is currently coordinating a randomized clinical trial of 2,700 U.S. adults to examine the connection between vitamin D deficiencies and COVID-19. As you know, these are among some of the top medical schools in our country.

The consensus is clear. While more research is needed to detail the specific connection between vitamin D and COVID-19, it is evident those with sufficient levels of vitamin D tend to fare much better against the virus and develop less severe symptoms and unfavorable outcomes, including longer hospital stays and ICU admittance.

This apparent link between vitamin D deficiencies and COVID-19 has been observed by multiple medical teams in Europe as well. In late October, as part of a study in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology &

Metabolism, researchers looked at 216 COVID-19 patients in a hospital in Spain. Over 80 percent of patients were deficient in vitamin D and those with lower vitamin D levels had longer hospital stays and higher inflammatory markers within their lungs. Additionally, both the Irish and UK public health establishments have issued recommendations on vitamin D intake during the pandemic and the UK plans on distributing vitamin D supplements to vulnerable populations throughout the winter.

It is also worth noting that President Trump, as advised by the White House attending physician, took vitamin D while he was infected with COVID-19 and Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease expert, publicly commented earlier this fall on his personal use of vitamin D supplements to maintain a healthy immune system while encouraging others to do so.

As you continue negotiations surrounding a COVID-19 relief package, I urge you to consider including language to require the CDC examine the relationship between vitamin D deficiencies and COVID-19 to determine whether guidance should be issued recommending vitamin D intake, particularly for vulnerable populations, communities with high rates of deficiencies and immunocompromised individuals.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glenn Grothman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background behind the text.